



In Good Taste

UPDATE FROM NCDA&CS FOOD DISTRIBUTION DIVISION FALL 2011

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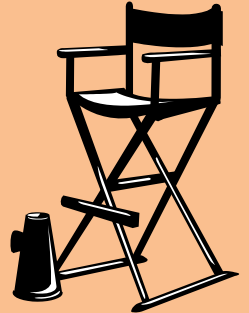
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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By Gary W. Gay

I would like to welcome everyone back to school and I hope you have a very successful year. Now let's get down to business. I am going to be very frank with you in my comments. I have referenced many times in the past that USDA was developing a new computer system WBSCM and it was rolled out last March 2011 for states to place their orders in this system. Well, as we turn the corner into another school year, the WBSCM system is the driving force for all USDA commodity transactions. Our staff, as well as all the other Food Distribution Directors across the country, were fearful that the system may not be what was expected. As we enter the month of October our fears have been realized. A review of the data produced by the program shows it is not totally trustworthy. The WBSCM system is riddled with problems, bugs, you just name it. I am glad we made the decision to develop NC ECOS and stay away from WBSCM at the school level. The problems are felt by all users' producers, vendors, processors, distributors, and state staff. Unfortunately, there is no light at the end of the tunnel; we just move forward each day and do the best we can. I know this is no comfort to you as you are trying to track your commodity dollars and the information is not reliable. I do not foresee this getting fixed anytime soon. We will do the best we can and provide you the most reliable information possible. This is not meant to frighten anyone, but just to make you aware of what we are facing. This will be a most difficult year.



SY 2010-2011 Record Breaking Year

2010-2011 saw another record broken in the dollar value of USDA Commodities coming in to the state. North Carolina saw \$66,464,708 in USDA commodities pass through the state. Public Schools received \$42,197, 228 in USDA commodities. Food Banks and other Emergency Feeding Organizations received \$23,046,140 in USDA commodities.





Commodity Outlook

This has been a very challenging year thus far due to late vegetable crops, lack of inventory, lack of bids, system learning curves and high prices on commodity product which ended in no award.

As a result, USDA/AMS has not been able to purchase many orders for early 2011-2012 school year delivery - especially fruits and vegetables. The timeframe to change orders and re-solicit bids has not allowed USDA/AMS to work as closely with states to revise orders. Several orders for delivery September and October have been moved to November and December delivery. Orders that will not be purchased have been canceled quickly to free up entitlement and 4th quarter funds. USDA/AMS has been urgently updating orders for re-solicitation or cancellation to free up funds as it is the end of the fiscal year as there is much pressure to expend funds. They are rushing to make awards for November/December deliveries versus January or later.

PRODUCT DELAYS AND CANCELLATIONS

- Salsa: Due to late crops USDA did not receive bids for September and October salsa, these orders have been moved to November deliveries
- Turkey Roast: Procurement for delivery prior to Thanksgiving does not look promising. We are still attempting by-weekly solicitations.
- Frozen Potatoes: Frozen Potato orders have not been purchased due to freezing weather. Solicitation was cancelled due to no bids received. It has been suggested the next solicitation period will not be until January, so prepare an alternate source until then.
- The school year is off to a rocky beginning; believe it or not, more food is getting bought than not...however it is late. We can only hope this situation will improve.





FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

The NC Farm to School program wrapped up its most successful year since the program began in 1998. Total sales have increased to over \$985,000. We would have exceeded the \$1 million dollar mark if not for cool rainy days in

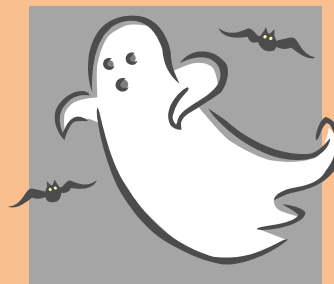
May that prevented growers from being able to fill all of the orders. We expect the program to continue to grow with three additional delivery dates this school year. For the first time ever, school systems who participate in the DOD program will now have the opportunity to purchase Farm to School items using their entitlement money. This issue has been a hot topic for several years.

We also brought back Farm to School for summer school. There were three delivery periods in July and August with 11 different items to choose from. Judging from the success we had this year, we hope to be able to provide a menu of items for next summer.

This school year got off to a tremendous start, with new record sales for cantaloupes, watermelons, and tomatoes. A new item was also introduced, NC peaches. Directors have asked us about peaches for quite some time and we were glad to be able provide. Food Distribution is also bidding Farm to School out quarterly in an effort to obtain better pricing. This helps the growers as well to see what the market prices are closer to harvest. In the coming months we are offering broccoli, green cabbage, romaine lettuce, apples, apple slices, and sweet potatoes. So be looking for NC-ECOS alerts to place orders.

Following are some promotional materials for you to make use of in your schools. Don't miss out on Farm to School Month. Also, offer your students an opportunity to submit artwork for the 2012-2013 Farm to School Calendar, which are a big hit this year.

Visit the NC Farm to School Website www.ncfarmtoschool.com for more information.





National Farm to School Month Promotion

October has been declared National Farm to School Month. NCDA& CS wants to learn more about the great things schools are doing to promote the program. The NC Farm to School Cooperative has contributed prize money for the best promotion of NC Farm to School and the produce you receive through the program.

Guidelines:

- Send pictures or portfolios of your promotional and educational displays about NC Farm to School during the month of October.
- Visit the NC Farm to School website, www.ncfarmtoschool.com, for lesson plans, classroom activities and other resources.
- All items are due by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 15, 2011
- Send items to Heather Barnes, NCDA&CS, 1020 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1020 or heather.barnes@ncagr.gov

Prizes:

All winners will be promoted on our website, www.ncfarmtoschool.com, our facebook page, www.facebook.com/NCFarmtoSchool, and in our newsletter.

1 st prize	\$250
2 nd prize	\$150
3 rd prize	\$100

For more information contact Heather Barnes at heather.barnes@ncagr.gov or 919-707-3127.

The North Carolina Farm to School Calendar Contest

The North Carolina Farm to School Calendar Contest for SY 2012-2013 kicked off in early September. Hopefully you received an e-mail with the entry details, awards, deadlines and entry form. You can find this information and more at the ncfarmtoschool.com website, as well as contact information for Heather Barnes. She will be happy to take your questions and comments.



The Farm to School Calendars were such a big hit in the schools this year, we cannot wait to see the entries for next school year!

Disaster Preparedness

Hopefully, with the technology in forecasting of storms and landfall projections, school districts in the path of storms or any disaster will have time to review their Emergency Readiness Plan: Guide and Forms for School Foodservice Operations. The National Food Service Management Institute, University of Mississippi, developed this useful tool through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. The guide will assist schools in preparing six steps to a successful readiness plan. The Food Distribution Field Staff are happy to meet with you to review and discuss your disaster readiness plan – just give them a call.



Hurricane Irene one month later; the Federal Emergency Management Agency says nearly 27,000 people have applied for assistance like referrals, temporary housing, repairs to damaged homes, disaster related medical expenses and personal items destroyed or lost in the storm. 6,640 of those applications came from North Carolina residents.

FEMA has granted \$75.8 million so far nationwide. The organization has awarded \$19.6 million to individuals and municipalities in 37 North Carolina counties.

Several eastern North Carolina schools suffered large food losses from the recent storms. Please review your USDA commodity inventory and notify Bob.Sitton@ncagr.gov of any excess product you may like to transfer to one of these school districts.

(www.witnnews.com)



Snokist Applesauce Recall Update

NCDA&CS Food Distribution Division is in the final stages of working out the few remaining details in hope of soon closing out this chapter. The Snokist recall affected 24 school districts and exceeded \$65,000.

I am happy to inform you that we do see the light at the end of this tunnel and are hoping to receive payment by the end of October. Once the payment is received, we will send checks to the school districts based upon their pro-rata share.

New Warehouse Manager

Tony Wilkins joined the Food Distribution staff in July as the new Butner Warehouse Manager. We are sure you will be talking with him soon.

NEW CHILD NUTRITION ADMINISTRATORS



Angela Rodriguez
arodriguez@currituck.k12.nc.us

Currituck County Schools

Michael Thompson
thompsonm@weldoncityschools.k12.nc.us

Weldon City Schools

Larry Obeda
Obedal.psrc@roberson.k12.nc.us

Robeson County Schools

Gretchen Sharlow
Gretchen.Sharlow@craven.k12.nc.us

Craven County Schools

Retired Child Nutrition Administrators

Kim Williams

Graham County Schools

Note: Kim retired first of last year and was missed in the last edition of In Good Taste. Congratulations Kim!

NCDPI FALL CONFERENCE

We look forward to seeing everyone at the Sheraton Imperial, October 19-21, 2011. We hope you will plan to attend the NCDA breakout session on "Marketing Your Farm-to-School Program." We hope to see you there!

2011 MARCH ACROSS CAROLINA

Please join us for our annual USDA Commodity Food Show on November 9-10, 2011. Wednesday, November 9 we will be at the NC State Fairgrounds in the Exposition Building. Thursday, November 10 we will be in Hickory at the Metro Convention Center.



Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. each day followed by a USDA Training session from 9:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. Our training session will be devoted to Net Off Invoice (NOI) for which we will have a nine member panel that will cover NOI from beginning to end. The panel will consist of representatives including; food brokers, commercial distributors, child nutrition directors, and the Department of Public Instruction. The NOI process involves each category of our panelist, so this will give you the opportunity to ask questions to the appropriate panelist. The Food Show will start at 10:00 a.m. and last until 2:00 p.m. We look forward to seeing you there.

Please note: The Training Session in Raleigh will be held in the Hall of Fame Room, located inside the Jim Graham Building adjacent to the Exposition Building.

USDA COMMODITY ACADEMY

We will be holding our USDA Commodity Academy on February 15 and 16, 2012 at our office in Butner. This training is centered on an intense look at how the USDA Commodity Food program works in our state with the National School Lunch Program.



Come learn how you can make the commodity program work as an asset to your program. The training is intended for new child nutrition directors, supervisors and those who work with NC-ECOS, however, all are welcome. I encourage you to attend; it never hurts to take a refresher course. The training will be conducted over two days and we will make it enjoyable. Plan to join us in February to take advantage of this training opportunity.



ACDA Conference

The American Commodity Distribution Association (ACDA) will be holding its Annual Conference May 4-8, 2012 in Costa Mesa, California at the Hilton Orange County. ACDA is an association made up of all the stakeholders in the USDA Commodity Program. If you would like more information about the conference or the association, you may contact Gary Gay or go to www.commodityfoods.org

Uruguay visits Brunswick County Schools

In March, Rotary Clubs in Southeastern North Carolina hosted a group of five professional adults from Uruguay on a vocational exchange. All of these adults make their living in the agricultural industry. The purpose of this exchange was to provide them with education and exposure to industries related to crops, livestock, water and soil research, animal research, food safety, and aquaculture.

A visit to Brunswick County Schools was one of the vocational visits. The visit included a trip to the kitchen at South Brunswick High School where the group met with Tina Ward, Child Nutrition Director. Tina explained every step in the HACCP Plan from food storage to preparation and serving, cleaning and sanitation, and documentation.



The group was then treated to a school lunch and enjoyed some of the USDA commodity products!

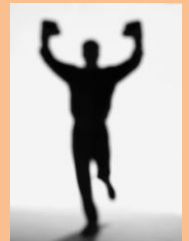


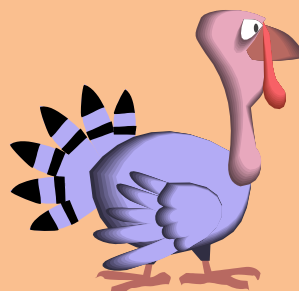
Left to right: Patricia, Sebastian, Jimena, Josie Highsmith (NCDCA), Tina Ward (Brunswick County Schools), Gonzalo, Javier, and Bob Stinston (Rotary member)

SNA-NC JUNE TRADE SHOW WINNERS

THE FOLLOWING NAMES WERE DRAWN AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE NEW HORIZONS TRADE SHOW DURING THE SNA-NC CONFERENCE.

BILLY OWENS - STOKES COUNTY SCHOOLS - FDD TRUCK
GERALDINE SUTTON - LENOIR COUNTY SCHOOLS – FDD DISPLAY PROPS
GRETCHEN SHARLOW - ONSLOW COUNTY SCHOOLS – GIFT BASKET







ACRONYM LIST

ACDA	- American Commodity Distribution Association
ARRA	- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
ECOS	- The Electronic Commodity Ordering System
FDD	- Food Distribution Division
FNS	- Food and Nutrition Service
FY	- Fiscal Year
NCDPI	- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
NCECOS	- North Carolina Electronic Commodity Ordering System
SFA	- School Food Authority
SNA	- School Nutrition Association
SY	- School Year
USDA	- United States Department of Agriculture
WBSCM	- Web Based Supply Chain Management
WNC	- Western North Carolina

Steve Troxler Commissioner of Agriculture
Gary W. Gay Director of Food Distribution
Bob Sitton.....Publisher/Editor/Administrator for Field Services

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Send any changes or comments to:

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